Welcome to Story Station U on 89-3 WGSU, Geneseo's Voice of the Valley, your local radio broadcast where campus life meets American headlines! I'm your host, Madilyn Becker, and I'll be breaking down the recent news that could change your weekend plans- or maybe your future! Don't forget: you can follow along with tonight's script and read all of my sources online at the WGSU website!

Thank you for joining me tonight! It's been a news-packed week, but don't worry; I'm here to break down all of the top headlines!

To begin tonight's show, I'll be presenting an in-depth look at the series of recent airline crashes in the U.S. During the evening of January 29th, an American Airlines plane collided mid air with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter. The crash left sixty-four passengers on the American Airlines flight, along with their pilot and co-pilot, deceased, as well as the three soldiers aboard the Black Hawk. The tragic incident ended with both aircraft falling into the Potomac River, and sadly, left no survivors. Many of the passengers aboard the American Airlines jet were young figure skaters returning from a U.S. Figure Skating Competition in Kansas. Some skaters' coaches and families were also among those who perished in the crash. The U.S. Figure Skating organization and olympic figure skater and commentator, Johnny Weir, were among many to release heartfelt statements after the crash. Weir spoke for the figure skating community, saying, "we are absolutely heartbroken by the news that several members of our skating community were among those lost in the tragic plane crash in Washington, D.C.". This accident marks the deadliest aviation disaster in the United States since 2001. According to an ABC News update, crews started working last night to begin removing the aircraft engines from the water, along with one wing of the American Airlines jet. Also, as of Monday night, fifty-four sets of human remains have been identified. Although the investigation into the crash is just beginning, CNN published reports suggesting the Black Hawk was flying above the altitude that helicopters of its nature are usually restricted to. According to CNN, preliminary reports announced at a recent news conference regarding the collision, indicate that the helicopter may have been flying above its allowed altitude. National Transportation Safety Board Member Todd Inman revealed that according to data available to air traffic controllers, the Black Hawk was flying at two-hundred feet, the limit to which it would have been restricted. However, data shows that the American Airlines flight was flying at approximately three-hundred and twenty-five feet at the time of impact. Inman commented that this discrepancy will continue to be investigated. He went on to explain that "when an impact occurs, that is typically where the altitude of both aircraft were at the moment", but that investigators do not yet have "readout" from the helicopter, so there is no way to prove what altitude the aircraft was flying at. Also according to CNN's report: flight tracking data from moments before the collision show the Black Hawk straying from its prescribed route. The National Transportation Safety Board will take about thirty days to release a preliminary report on the crash, however, a final report and probable cause will take much more time to be released.

President Donald Trump held a press conference the day after the fatal crash over the Potomac River. He reportedly began the conference with a moment of silence and prayer for the victims, however, his comments sparked backlash. He stated his belief that DEI programs put in

place by former presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama were to blame for the disaster. When asked to back up these claims, President Trump explained that his administration holds a ‘’high standard’’ regarding who is hired to act as air traffic controllers. He told reporters that “Biden went by a standard that seeks the exact opposite”. Also during his conference, Donald Trump blamed former president Biden and his Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, for using their DEI policies to hire air traffic controllers who had disabilities. A former Federal Aviation Administration official spoke anonymously to the Washington Post and commented: ‘’Consideration for people with disabilities is a long-standing, government-wide policy that does not apply to hiring air traffic controllers”. A reporter at President Trump’s news conference stated that DEI policy information had been on the Federal Aviation Administration’s website since 2013. President Trump countered, saying that he had changed former president Barack Obama’s policy during his first term as president in 2017, but then former president Joe Biden changed the Trump administration policy, and as of recent, President Trump himself signed another new policy regarding DEI within the Federal Aviation Administration. When told by a reporter that he was trying to understand how President Trump could reasonably claim that DEI was responsible for the recent crash, the president bluntly replied “because I have common sense, okay?’’. Former Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigeig, who the president called out by name while blaming DEI policies for the disaster, posted a statement on X, formerly known as Twitter, after the news conference. He wrote “As families grieve, Trump should be leading, not lying. We put safety first, drove down close calls, grew air traffic control, and had zero commercial airline crash fatalities out of millions of flights on our watch”. Also criticizing the president’s remarks, was the nonprofit group, Paralyzed Veterans of America. The group advocates for U.S. veterans with severe disabilities. Their statement called Donald Trump’s comments “shameful” and “disrespectful”. The group’s chief executive, Carl Blake, wrote in the statement explaining that he himself is a U.S. veteran, and spent many hours aboard a Black Hawk helicopter. He went on to say that “veterans and all people with disabilities are dedicated, highly skilled, and fully qualified to tackle the most difficult jobs possible”.

Let’s turn to our next headline of tonight: a jet crash in Northeast Philadelphia only two days after the devastating aircraft collision above Washington. According to NBC Philadelphia News, the aircraft was a medical jet carrying six patients, including a young girl who had just received life-saving care and her mother. The mayor of Philadelphia, Cherelle Parker, confirmed that all six patients aboard the flight died, and the crash resulted in at least twenty-three other casualties upon hitting the ground. Footage also shows the explosion of the jet leading to several homes in the surrounding area catching on fire. Philadelphia mayor Parker stated that the number of homes affected was at least eleven, and that a few businesses saw impacts as well. The National Transportation Safety Board has been named to lead the investigation into this crash; no official cause of the crash has been released yet.

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Our next headline of tonight: President Trump delays the enforcing of tariffs on Mexico and Canada. During his 2024 presidential campaign, president Trump promised tariffs on countries such as Mexico, China, and Canada. He has written on Truth Social, this decision is

aimed at protecting American citizens from ‘’the major threat of illegal aliens and deadly drugs killing our citizens, including fentanyl”. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency published a statistic stating that in 2023, more than one-hundred thousand people died due to drug overdose, with nearly seventy percent of those being from opioids, such as fentanyl. While American citizens, government officials, and other countries’ government officials agree that illegal fentanyl must be caught and limited, it is not agreed that tariffs are the best way to limit these drug overdoses. TIME Magazine describes tariffs, saying they are ‘’useful tools used by politicians”, and defines them as “taxes placed on goods imported from other countries”. Tariffs are typically paid by domestic importers and to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. TIME also states that economists say tariffs often lead to sellers increasing prices of their goods to make up for the increased price of importing them. Recently, President Trump announced a 25% tariff on goods imported from Canada and Mexico. However, according to NBC News, the president has since announced that these tariffs will be paused after conversations with Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and Mexican President, Claudia Sheinbaum. The prime minister announced that Canada would be spending over one billion dollars to reinforce border security in efforts to stop the spread of illegal fentanyl. Mexican President Sheinbaum released a statement saying that Mexico plans to ‘’immediately” reinforce its border security with ten thousand Mexican National Guard members, specifically focused on catching those attempting to carry fentanyl across the Mexican border. President Trump took to Truth Social to announce that tariffs would be paused for thirty days while the U.S. attempts to negotiate an economic deal with Canada, and that Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent, and Commerce Secretary, Howard Lutnick would continue to negotiate border security with Mexico. Dana Peterson is the chief economist at The Conference Board, a nonprofit business research organization. She told USA Today, “if you impose tariffs, prices actually go up”. Notable about President Trump’s proposed tariffs is that they would be placed on Mexico, the United States’ largest agricultural trading partner, according to USA Today. Ernie Tedeschi, the director of economics at the Yale Budget Lab, noted that consumers can sometimes delay or skip purchases of items affected by tariffs, however, limiting purchases of fresh food would be much harder.

Our last headlines of the evening are the several political statements made at Sunday night’s 67th Annual Grammy Awards. The Grammys are often described as ‘’music’s biggest night”, but last night, many musicians used the opportunity to make their voices heard, musically and politically. Best New Artist Award winner, Chappel Roan, talked to a reporter during the Grammys red carpet ceremony, saying “trans people have always existed, and they will forever exist, and they will never, no matter what happens, take trans joy away”. Shakira, in her Grammy acceptance speech, said proudly that she dedicated her award to all of her ‘’immigrant brothers and sisters in this country”. She continued by saying “You are loved. You are worth it and I will always fight with you”. Lady Gaga also used her acceptance speech to make a political statement, saying “trans people are not invisible”. Alicia Keys was presented with the honorable Dr. Dre Global Impact Award, and said in her speech, “DEI is not a threat, it's a gift”. These statements come after President Donald Trump has reversed several policies put in place by former president, Joe Biden, supporting gender-affirming medical care and signed an executive order ending DEI, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, programs on the federal level.

And to cap things off, it's time for this week's good news story! This week's moment of good news took place in Detroit, Michigan. In late January of 2025, Detroit firefighter Matt Dunaj planned to take his own life. Stress of work and financial struggles piled up. One day, when he was home alone, Dunaj went into his basement with a loaded gun, prepared to take his own life. His dog, a golden doodle named Mia, heard the sound of the gun cocking, and rushed into the basement. Dunaj said "In that unconditional love, she licked me in my face and kind of got me out of it". Dunaj gave his gun to his brother, and began receiving help from Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery. He credits Mia for saving his life, and says that he spends even more time with her now, going for walks and cuddling. If you are a student at SUNY Geneseo and experiencing mental health challenges , Student Health and Counseling offers health care, mental health care, and addiction counseling and services. Every student has access to these services through their MyHealth portal. If you are not a college student, but feel you are struggling with your mental health, the suicide crisis hotline is availabe 24/7 by calling 988. The Livingston County website also lists mental health resources in our area. Mental Health America works to research mental health treatments and advocate for those suffering from poor mental health. They accept donations online on their website, mhanational.org. The Trevor Project is a non-profit organization working to end suicide and mental health crisis among LGBTQ+ youth. They also accept donations online, on their website, thetrevorproject.org.

Before our show ends tonight, I would like to recognize February as Black History Month! Since 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson created Negro History Week, which evolved into Black History Month when President Gerald Ford recognized it in 1976, every year has celebrated a certain theme throughout the black history. This year's theme is African Americans and labor. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History encourages people this month to consider black peoples' work while examining black history, life, and culture. They recognize the various kinds of work, free, unfree, skilled, unskilled, vocational, and voluntary, and how these are at the center of black culture. Black educators also highlight the significance of entrepreneurship and organized labor groups in the black community.

That's our top headlines for tonight, but the world never stops spinning and news never stops breaking, so join me again next Tuesday, same place, same time for all of your top headlines! Don't forget you can read my script and see all of tonight's sources on WGSU's website! Thank you again for joining me tonight. I'm your host, Madilyn Becker, and I'll talk to you next week on 89-3 WGSU, Geneseo's Voice of the Valley!